

NIGHT-FALL IN THE WOODS.

BY OUR FLEET STREET NATURALIST.

(Who rather fancies himself in the style of
the late RICHARD JEFFERIES.)

In this wooded country night appears to fall slowly. Perhaps it is that in the dead January weather the light in and round the woods is never very clear, and that, as night draws on, some light is held and reflected in the golden sheen of the fallen ash leaves, and so, as it were, prolongs the dusk.

Here, on the north side of the great wood, it is peculiarly still, and, as I wait in an angle between a giant beech and the crumbling wall of the old Roman camp, objects across the fields slowly lose their definition.

Early as it is, the note of the nightingale floats from the coppice above, and the regular swish of the scythe in the meadow below can be distinctly heard.

Presently, from the corner of the great wood, a hen pheasant hops out to her evening meal, followed by her devoted lord, and ere long the whole covey rise and wing their way to their resting-place in the wide stubbles adjoining.

Still and dreary as woods seem in winter, it is only so to those whose ears are untuned to Nature. In the beech above there is a faint rustle, and yonder by the knot-hole appears the lithe red body of a stoat, busy feeding her young on the abundant beech-mast and acorns. The rabbits seem everywhere; country people still maintain that two or three of these faithful little animals inhabit one hole—locally called a “bury.”

From below comes the footfall of the keeper—a strong and wholesome man, surely, with his hounds clustering round his feet. The sportsmen, bending under their load of game, have crossed the park to the great house. The sport is over; the game has been counted amid the lusty and well-earned plaudits of the beaters—hare and grouse, partridge and rabbit, and their blood stains the greensward.

A little later, and fresh from his burrow under the old crab-tree comes Red Reynard; with easy springs he crosses the meadow, and woe betide the rat or mouse that crosses his path this night! As I stand, his deep baying voice drifts through the coming darkness.

Another visitor, this time daintily crossing the ride at my back; surely no animal has so beautiful an eye as a hare. Encouraged by the stillness of all things, she stops and gracefully performs her toilet, softly laving first her ears and face, and then her body, in the sedge-grown brook. At the clank of the gate, as the keeper leaves the wood, she is



A QUALIFIED GUIDE.

*Befogged Pedestrian. "COULD YOU DIRECT ME TO THE RIVER, PLEASE?"**Hatless and dripping Stranger. "STRAIGHT AHEAD. I'VE JUST COME FROM IT!"*

instantly in her burrow. Hares, unlike rabbits, rarely make a bolt-hole.

The gentle wind that has swayed the topmost boughs of the trees is stilled; the mist slowly rises from the brook, veiling the alders as it were in a silvery shroud; the fern-owl chants out his *requiem* to the dying day; and so night comes.

Mr. WILL CROOKS, M.P., recently opened a new public library, and is reported by the *Standard* as having said that “two years ago the son of a boiler-

maker in Poplar went from a junior Scholarship to an intermediate, and then a senior, and in his very first year at Cambridge took his blue (*cheers*). Could he have done that if it had not been for the public library?” This is indeed a fine tribute to authors like Mr. EUSTACE MILES. Or was it a chess blue?

À propos of the announcement that H. B. IRVING is to appear as Hamlet at the Adelphi Theatre (date unfixed):—

“Not AMURATH an AMURATH succeeds,
But HARRY HENRY.”—*2 Hen. IV.*, v. 2.

THE SLUMP IN POETS.

[MR. JOHN LANE, Specialist, of the Bodley Head, has recently consented to discuss with an interviewer the depression in the Poetry Market. He is not, however, responsible for the theories advanced in the following lines.]

Lo! where a Century lies still-born,
The Patron's tears come down like sleet,
And barren cries from lips forlorn
Ring on the roofs of Vigo Street;
In vain among the groves to search,
Cheerless and bare and dumb and chilly,
Where vocal fowls were wont to perch
Just at the back of Piccadilly.

Scarce half a score of years have sped
(Who was it wrote that "Art is long?")
Since every hair on Bodley's Head
Harboured a separate bird of song;
Yes, that enchanted spot was then
A very Zoo of *aes rara*—
The pencilled lark, the Gallic hen,
The yellow rook, the blue canary.

Imbibing Heliconian dew,
Nightjar and jay and turtle-dove
Sang Bacchus and his satyr crew,
Silenus, Liberty and Love;
All day, and loudest after dark,
Their shrill and space-defying chorus
Would reach as far as Bedford Park,
It was so poignant, so sonorous.

But now—poor Hippocrene is dry,
Where once, with heavenly wings unfrayed,
Squadrons of prancing Pegasi
Swept up the Burlington Arcade;
And if you ask, "Where springs the rill
That laves the local Muse's Mountain?"
You will be thought an imbecile,
And told to try the Shaftesbury Fountain.

I have a friend that lately found
A pilgrim, come from oversea,
Pacing, as if on holy ground,
The cloisters of The Albany,
Who said: "Right here, Sir, I opine,
Your British Muse is still located?"
Whereat the other made no sign,
Deeming his man inebriated.

Where lies the cause that facts are thus?
A dearth of topics? Surely no!
Why, what about the Motor-bus,
The Tube and Bridge and L'Art Nouveau?
May not the loftiest poet find
Inspiring stuff in modern movements,
And trace a beauty (undesigned)
Even in things like Strand "improvements?"

Alas! the evil lies within;
It is the lust for higher pay,
The passion (so debased) to win
Fortune by some more facile way;
Greedy to pouch the larger loaf,
Young men who might have made our verses
Transfer to tout, or type, or chauff,
Or ride as mutes on funeral hearses.

And this is why no bards occur.
None ever knows that aching void,
That hunger, prompting like a spur,
Which former genii enjoyed;

For all the poets dead and gone
Whose Muse contrived to melt the nation
Habitually did it on
A regimen of strict starvation.
Yet is the fault not theirs alone
Who love their ease before their Art;
The public's self is somewhat prone
To let its stomach blunt its heart;
For men in these expansive times
(Due, I am told, to fiscal freedom),
Though earth were black with angels' rhymes,
Dine far too well to want to read 'em. O. S.

QUEEN SYLVIA.

CHAPTER X.

A Momentous Interview.

THE news that the Queen had decided by and with the advice of her Ministers to propose to the King of EISENBLUT a personal meeting for the friendly discussion of the difficulty outstanding between their respective countries, was received by the population of Hinterland with extreme astonishment. Nothing in their past history had prepared them for anything but a warlike settlement of a question which had assumed dimensions so great and bristled with complications so serious and so varied. When, however, the great official newspaper declared in a double-leaded leading article that it had foreseen for some time past that events were inevitably moving in this direction; that, as a matter of fact, no other method of adjustment had ever been contemplated or thought possible by Her Majesty's advisers, and that it redounded much to the Queen's credit and would, indeed, reflect indelible glory upon her to have chosen the exact psychological moment for making a proposal which would probably have the effect of saving two great nations from the dreadful horrors of war—why, then it began to be realised by all that the decision was one for applause and not for censure. Thereupon was to be observed the wonderful spectacle of a whole people rushing precipitately from a sanguinary and overmastering desire for battles into a passionate adherence to the sacred cause of peace. To be sure there were one or two trifling exceptions to the chorus of praise. An evening paper, for instance, which combined no reputation for wisdom or good taste with a small circulation and a large measure of insolence, declared solemnly that if such things as these were done in the green tree it shuddered to think what might happen in the dry. For itself, it continued, it would protest to the last against so criminal a surrender. Was it for nothing, then, it asked in indignant tones, that the great Field Marshal, the hero of a hundred victorious battles, had been summoned from his leisure retirement, that the manhood of the country had trooped to the colours, and that all the war-correspondents had been bidden by those who were in the counsels of the War Office to prepare their service uniforms and their official badges?

"There can be but one explanation," it concluded. "The Ministers have sold their country, and made the Queen a laughing-stock. We demand their immediate impeachment."

Nobody, however, took so much notice of this bombast as might be involved in breaking the windows of the editorial office; and when the Poet Laureate, in accents of almost painful sincerity—they were published at one shilling, bound in white and stamped with doves and olive branches in gold on both covers—when, as I say, the Poet Laureate implored

The child who sways the sceptre to proceed,
Heedless of clamour, scornful of intrigue,
Boldly to register a matchless deed
Where in a white-winged league
Mercy and peace and justice are combined—

it was acknowledged that he had once again interpreted with



READY TO OBLIGE.

RIGHT HON. ARTH-R J. B-LF-R (*meditatively, aloud*). "I WISH I COULD FIND A DOUBLE TO TAKE MY PLACE IN THE HOUSE!"

MR. W-NST-N CH-RCH-LL (*aside to himself*). } "OUGHT NOT TO BE ANY DIFFICULTY ABOUT THAT!"
MR. LI-YD-G-RGE (*aside to himself*). }

[John Chilcote, M.P., in Mrs. THURSTON's novel (about to be dramatised) has a double who acts as his substitute in Parliament.]

JA



A DOUBTFUL CHARACTER.

Mabel (to mother, who has just read announcement of forthcoming local dog show). "OH, MOTHER, DO LET'S SEND 'SCAMP.'" Mother. "NO, DEAR. I'M AFRAID HE'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH." Mabel. "WHY—WHAT'S HE DONE NOW?"

an inspired exactness the sentiments of the immense majority of the population.

Thus it came about that when SYLVIA set forth on her expedition she was acclaimed by an overwhelming demonstration of national joy. The houses burst out with bunting, arches of imitative masonry sprang up in unexpected thoroughfares, strong men shouted and wept, three old ladies of the working-class broke through the cordon at different points and endeavoured to kiss her hand, and the Lord Mayor, having delivered an address at the railway station, pushed forward his reluctant five-year-old daughter to present the Queen with a gigantic bouquet of lilies and white roses. In fact, everything showed that the great heart of the people had been deeply moved.

The place chosen for the meeting between Queen SYLVIA and King OTHO was the historic town of Acheval, which stands, as it were, astride of the frontier line dividing the two countries, half of it being in Hinterland, while the other half was in Eisenblut. In the midst of it is laid out a noble garden extending along the frontier and adorned with pavilions and trophies of both nations. Here the Sovereigns were to meet and decide. There had been some natural trouble at first in fixing an hour for the interview, for the question of time, as you will remember, was the very origin of the crisis. A spirit of accommodation had, however, prevailed, and, after minor concessions on the subject of hours and minutes had been made (without prejudice) on both sides, this important matter was finally arranged to the satisfaction of everybody.

Punctually at the time appointed SYLVIA arrived in her

portion of the town, while at the same moment King OTHO steamed into his. Ten minutes afterwards King OTHO, in the uniform of the Hinterland Fusiliers (the Die-Hards), of which he was Honorary Colonel, and attended by a numerous Staff, called at SYLVIA's Pavilion and inscribed his name in the visiting book. Half an hour after that Queen SYLVIA, in the uniform of the Eisenblut Lancers (the Ever Triumphant), of which she was Honorary Colonel, returned the King's visit at his Pavilion. Both sides then retired for refreshments, and an hour afterwards to the minute the real business began.

It was, if I may say so, with a beating heart and the Foreign Minister at her side that SYLVIA at last found herself walking to the meeting-place in the centre of the garden, while in the distance might be dimly descried the figures of King OTHO and his Minister advancing with a similar intention.

"Your Majesty," said SYLVIA's attendant earnestly, "will not forget to insist on the importance of the astronomical tables which my department has drawn up. Our whole case hinges on them."

"The astronomical tables?" said SYLVIA vaguely. "Did you give them to me?"

"They are in your Majesty's muff," said the Foreign Minister.

"Yes, yes, so they are. I hope I shall remember everything," said the Queen. "I shall certainly try to. Well, he really is *very* good-looking. Announce me," she added with that dignity which was one of her strongest characteristics.

King OTHO on his side had been not without some anxiety as to the interview, but when he set eyes on the beautiful

young Queen his heart gave a leap and he began to forget his time-tables.

"By Zeus!" he said, "she is a delightful sight. I shall enjoy this interview."

"Your Majesty," said his Minister apprehensively, "will be firm on the question of clocks."

"Trust me," laughed the King. "I will be a regular devil for clocks," and, if a King may be supposed to wink, this King did so to the scandal of the statesman 'his companion.

The next moment the King and the Queen were presented to one another and walked off together.

What passed at this interview I know, but I shall not say. Many learned historians have spent much toil upon it, and to these I refer the curious. Certainly it was a long interview, and the two Foreign Ministers had exhausted all their diplomatic small talk long before it came to an end.

At last the two Sovereigns reappeared, and it was noticed that both were smiling, and that the King wore in the lapel of his coat a white rose which had not formerly adorned it.

"It is the custom amongst Kings," said OTHO, "to kiss when they part, since Kings are brothers."

"It is an honourable custom," said SYLVIA.

"And a Queen and a King," continued OTHO, "are sister and brother."

"Of course," said SYLVIA, "we must not neglect the rules." So they exchanged kisses in accordance with tradition.

"And, by the way," said SYLVIA in some dismay, "I have quite forgotten to mention the question—"

"Oh, the question of the time-tables and all that," said the King contemptuously. "As to that, I have decided. I withdraw my decrees. Everything shall be as before."

"You are very good," said SYLVIA.

"And you," said King OTHO, "are very beautiful."

Thus was peace assured between Hinterland and Eisenblut.

ARMS AND THE DOG.—Drastic measures have been taken in Hexhamshire for the destruction of the now notorious wolf, if we are to believe the *Newcastle Daily Journal*. "The hounds," it says, "were in the shire on Monday, and about a dozen of those on horseback and two on foot were armed with guns." This is indeed to "Cry havoc! and let loose the dogs of war."

THE loose habit of speech by which we identify animate objects with their surroundings—as in the phrases, "The House rose to its feet," or "The Gallery howled"—may easily lead us into trouble. Thus, from the *Exchange and Mart*:

MAHOGANY Palace shaped aviary, in good condition, 10s. 6d., very tame; parrakeet and cage, says few words, 10s. 6d.

A GOOD EXAMPLE.—The Masters of the Hon. Society of Gray's Inn recently issued a card of invitation to dinner, and two words were emphatically underlined, "*No Speeches*." Hear! Hear! This is the right festive and seasonable way of dishing up the Bore's Head. Just the loyal and ancient *toast sans phrase*. *O si sic omnes.*

A Home from Home.

WE have pleasure in publishing an extract from the prospectus of a Kinderhof, or Hostelry for Infants, clearly modelled on the lines of the Children's Hotel in New York.

HOTEL KIDDYMINSTER, BABBACOMBE.

WITHIN a few minutes' toddle of the sands. Rattle-band plays daily in the Great Indiarubber Ballroom. Hotel Pram meets all trains. Stabling for rocking-horses. Mailcart Garage.

SAD CONTRASTS.

The gentle savage on his lowly plane
Of bestial innocence and lack of culture,
Ignores, 'tis said, the modern social bane
Of boredom, blues, and mental overstrain,
That tears his betters like the mythic vulture.

Far from encouraging his private woes
He has a plan to dissipate them fully;
When he is dull, he takes a club and goes
Off to the most convenient of his foes,
And beats him for refreshment where he's woolly.

Sartorial laws that guide his nobler kin,
Even from birth, which all experience teaches
To be a sweet and decent discipline,
The unembarrassed creature honours in
The breach, and quite neglects them in the breeches.

Holding th' immodest minimum enough
To give him due protection from the weather,
He flaunts, devoid of artificial slough,
His highly burnished suit of native buff,
With, now and then, a ceremonial feather.

When in his easy Prime's inglorious noon
Touched to the heart by Cupid's wanton arrow,
It does not make him sigh, or sulk, or swoon,
(As we do) or affront the solemn Moon
With serenades that chill the lady's marrow.

Our ordered ritual of prayers and vows
And soft persuasive arts does not impress him;
No. When he sees a likely-looking spouse,
He buys her at her market rate in cows,
And never thinks of her opinion, bless him!

Nay, more. While you and I must rest content
(Apparently) with one domestic chattel,
The uninstructed pluralist may vent
His natural polygamistic bent
As often and as long as he has cattle.

The labour of the fields—to till the ground,
To reap the fruit, to guard the herds and flocks—is
With us the sterner sex's daily round;
He, by a mastery too rarely found,
Commits the toil to his connubial proxies.

And thus he lives unchastened by the rods
That Fortune pickles for the back of Labour:
The worst (and happiest) of moral clods,
He never knew his duty to his gods,
And wasn't taught his duty to his neighbour.]

O Readers, we are very wise, no doubt:
We know a power of science, art, and letters;
But if you come to think the matter out,
The artless wildling knows his way about
As well as any of his cultured betters.

He never thinks of what he "can't afford";
His tailor's bill approaches the ideal;
He does no work, and yet is never bored;
And has, beyond all doubt or question, scored
In having solved the Problem Hymeneal.

And oft, when sorrow bids me realise
All that he has, and I have lost, for ever,
I feel that I am tired of being wise;
And the vain, hungry, wish begins to rise
That I were less laboriously clever.

DUM-DUM.

THE NEW LAWS OF BRIDGE.

As some doubt prevails, except perhaps in clubs, about the latest rules, we have much pleasure in publishing them. We think they will add to the amenities of the game and greatly increase the enjoyment of the players.

Dummy.—The dealer's partner, after exposing his hand, has no part in the game, yet on no pretence whatever (except as at the end of this law) is he allowed to leave his seat, or to look over his adversaries' hands. He is entitled to say "Having none?" should the dealer renounce, but with this exception he must not speak, move, cough, sneeze, wink, smile, laugh, or make any noise or movement whatever. (If the players are ladies the dealer's partner is allowed to speak, but not more than ten words.) Should he do any of these things the adversaries are entitled to blindfold him with his own handkerchief, to gag him with his own pocket-pencil or penknife, and to tie him to his chair with antimacassars or with strips of window-curtains. If the players are ladies the adversaries are entitled to call her "a person." He (or she) is, however, allowed to cough or sneeze if he can show a doctor's certificate to prove that he is justified in doing so, and it is usual for the adversaries to raise no objection to his blinking his eyes, if it is natural and simultaneous, and in no way resembles a wink. Moreover, he (or she) is allowed to leave his chair in certain circumstances beyond his control, such as:—Apoplexy, Collapse of the Floor, whether due to jerry building or the weight of the players; Distraint of his Chair for Education Rate, whether he be a Passive Resister or not; Earthquakes; Explosions; Fire, in the same building; "Pins and Needles" in his foot—in this case only with the consent of the adversaries; Revolver Shots, as in mining camps and other unsettled districts; Riots, if immediately outside; Shells, if falling on the house during a bombardment; and Tidal Waves.

Tricks turned.—Once a trick is complete, turned and quitted, it must not be looked at until the end of the hand. If however an ace should, when turned, be found to have a pattern on the back quite different to the other cards, the players shall count their cards, and the one having an extra card shall be forcibly searched and compelled to eat any other aces found up his sleeves. The partner of the dealer is allowed to leave his chair to assist.

Revoke.—If a player revokes more than five times in two consecutive hands the other players are entitled to kick him on the shins, without undue violence, or, if

C. E. Brock
yrs.

FILLING THE BREACH.

Miss Smythe (organising a subscription dance). "I'M IN DESPAIR ABOUT OUR DANCE, MR. BROWN. SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE FAILED ME. YOU'LL COME, WON'T YOU?"

Mr. Brown. "REALLY, MISS SMYTHE, I'M NOT A DANCING MAN. I DON'T DANCE AT ALL!"

Miss S. "OH, THAT WON'T MATTER IN THE LEAST. YOU'D HELP TO FILL UP, YOU KNOW!"

Mr. B. "AH—YES—with pleasure. I WILL LOOK IN ABOUT SUPPER-TIME."

the players are ladies, to scratch her face gently. If all the players revoke more than five times in one hand it is advisable to stop the game.

An Echo of Mile End.

STRAUS shows
How the wind blows.

N.B.—At the risk of spoiling the grammar of the above poem, our readers of Jan. 19.

are invited, out of compliment to the nationality which Mr. STRAUS claims, to give a British pronunciation to his name.

A HEAVY SLEEPER.—"To-day's Marseilles boat express from London will be an exceptionally heavy train. The Duke of Devonshire will be among the passengers."—*Manchester Courier*

LIFE'S LITTLE DIFFICULTIES.

X.—THE SMITHSONS, THE PARKINSONS, AND COL. HOME-HOPKINS.

I.

Miss Daisy Hopping to a life-long school friend. (Extract.)

THE news is that mother is going to give another No. 1 dinner party, the first for three years. We are to have waiters from London instead of poor old SMART, the greengrocer, who breathes down your back, and two special *entrées*, and the champagne that grandpapa left us instead of what DICK always calls the Tête Montée brand for local consumption. And the county people are asked this time—no SMITHSONS and PARKINSONS and Col. HOME-HOPKINS, and the other regular old stodgers who go to all the parties within a radius of six miles. It is all because Uncle and Aunt MORDAUNT are coming from India, and he has just got a C.S.I.

II.

Messrs. Patti and Casserole to Mrs. Montgomery Hopping.

MADAM,—In reply to your esteemed favour of the 22nd we would suggest *quenelles de volaille aux champignons* as one *entrée* and *ris de veau à l'Armandine* as the other. The two waiters will come to you by the 3.5 from Euston. We are, Madam,

Yours faithfully,
PATTI AND CASSEROLE.

III.

Miss Daisy Hopping to the same life-long school friend. (Extract.)

Mother is in her best temper, as all the guests she has asked have accepted. LENA and I are not to come down to dinner, because there won't be room, but we are to go in afterwards, and Mother is giving us new dresses. Mine is [thirty lines omitted]. So you see it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Uncle MORDAUNT will talk about Stonehenge all the time, but they all say they are so charmed to be going to meet him.

IV.

Mrs. Leonard Hatt to Mrs. Montgomery Hopping.

DEAR MRS. HOPPING,—I am so very sorry to have to tell you that we shall not be able to dine with you on the 5th after all, as my husband is ill with a chill. You will, I know, be glad to hear that his temperature is now nearly normal, after a very anxious time, but the doctor forbids all thought of going out of doors for at least ten days. I am exceedingly sorry, as we were so looking forward to the evening at your pretty house and to seeing dear Sir MORDAUNT again. I am,

Yours sincerely,
MILDRED HATT.

V.

Lady Durdham to the Hon. Mrs. Willie Ross.

DEAR NANNY,—We reached town yesterday, after a delightful cruise, and now we want to see you and WILLIE more than anything, so come up on the 5th, Thursday, and we will go somewhere, and have supper, and talk it all over. If you have an engagement, break it.

Yours, BEE.

VI.

The Hon. Mrs. Willie Ross to Mrs. Montgomery Hopping.

DEAR MRS. HOPPING,—It is very distressing to me to have to decline an invitation after accepting it, but I have just discovered that we have an engagement for the 5th which cannot be put off. I am so very sorry, and I promise I will never be so careless again—if you ever give me another chance! Believe me, dear Mrs. HOPPING,

Yours very truly,
ANNETTE ROSS.

VII.

Canon Bath to Mrs. Montgomery Hopping.

MY DEAR MRS. HOPPING,—I very deeply regret to have to write as I must; but we are all servants and at the mercy of our masters, and the Bishop has just signified his intention of visiting Widdesdon on the day of your charming party, and has asked me to be his host.

To so good a churchwoman as yourself I need not say more, except that I am deeply concerned to have to break faith with you and to miss a congenial antiquarian gossip with Sir MORDAUNT. Believe me, dear Mrs. HOPPING,

Yours sincerely,
OLIVER BATH.

VIII.

Mrs. Vansittart to Mrs. Montgomery Hopping.

DEAR MRS. HOPPING,—I have put off writing till the last moment, hoping that the necessity might pass, but I am now forced to say that I shall not be able to dine with you on the 5th. Poor ARTHUR was brought home on Saturday, from mixed hockey, so badly bruised and injured that he has been in bed ever since and requires constant attention. I am sure that you (who also are a mother) will understand that I should not like to leave him in this state even for an evening; and so I hasten to let you know.

Yours sincerely,
KATE VANSITTART.

P.S.—You will please tell Sir MORDAUNT and Lady HOPPING that I am deeply grieved not to meet them.

IX.

Mrs. Montgomery Hopping to Messrs. Patti and Casserole. (Telegram.)

Mrs. MONTGOMERY HOPPING will not

require either the *entrées* or the waiters for the 5th.

X.

Miss Daisy Hopping to the same life-long school friend. (Extract.)

This house isn't fit to live in. Everyone who was invited has backed out, except old General STORES, who says he put off going to the South of France on purpose. Mother never thought he would come at all. If it weren't for him, mother (who is more like a whirlwind than anything I ever experienced) says she would have no party at all; but now she must go on with it, especially as she told Uncle MORDAUNT. And so it means the SMITHSONS and the PARKINSONS and Col. HOME-HOPKINS after all. The worst of it is we are not to have new dresses.

XI.

Mrs. Parkinson to Mrs. Montgomery Hopping.

DEAR MRS. MONTGOMERY HOPPING,—It will give Mr. PARKINSON and myself such very great pleasure to dine with you on the 5th to meet your distinguished brother-in-law. A dinner party at your house is always such an event, and in our remote neighbourhood, where excitements are so few, short notice perhaps adds to the delight. Believe me,

Yours sincerely,
MILDRED PARKINSON.

XII.

Col. Home-Hopkins to Mrs. Montgomery Hopping.

MY DEAR LADY,—Your word is always law, and you may count on me to be on your hospitable doorstep at the stroke of eight. Would that you had said seven, that an hour of happiness were added! I beg you not to apologise for what you call short notice. No notice should be too short to a soldier. I am, dear Lady, yours to command,

EDGAR HOME-HOPKINS.

XIII.

Mrs. Smithson to Mrs. Montgomery Hopping.

MY DEAR MRS. HOPPING,—It would give Mr. SMITHSON and myself much pleasure to accept your kind invitation were it not that we are a little in bondage to a visitor, a niece of my husband's, such a very nice girl, who is staying with us before taking up a position at Cannes as a companion to a very interesting old lady, the widow of Commander MUNCASTER, who, you may remember, died a few weeks ago. As we do not quite like to leave her alone all the evening I wondered if I might bring MADELINE with me. She is a very nice girl, and quite the best pupil at the Guildhall School of Music last year. Perhaps you would like her to bring some music with

her. I know it is often a help. But of course, dear Mrs. HOPPING, you will say at once if it is inconvenient or likely to put your table out, and then we can perhaps get Miss MOWERLY to come in for the evening and bring her knitting, as I should not like to refuse your very kind invitation. The Doctor was saying only the other day how long it was since we had the pleasure of dining with you. As for short notice, I hope you won't mention it. It is so difficult often to give long notice, as I know only too well.

Yours very truly,

MARTHA SMITHSON.

P.S.—I find I have not said how glad we shall be to see Sir MORDAUNT and Lady HOPPING.

XIV.

Mrs. Montgomery Hopping to Mrs. Smart.

To Mrs. SMART.

I am glad your husband can come for Thursday evening. I am counting on him to be here at five to help with the silver, and I shall want some mushrooms if you can get them, some French beans, and two heads of celery.

E. MONTGOMERY HOPPING.

DON QUIXOTE TO MR. PUNCH.

(*Translation.*)

VERY MISTER MY,—I hear that in this manner one now begins a letter in Spain. *Ay de mi!* How unlike the stately politeness and elegant phrases of my time! But then we are so far from the days of AMADIS DE GAULA, and are even now three hundred years from my first appearance, which your contemporaries, *Señor Punch*, have lately celebrated.

I hear sometimes of your country and its possessions, larger, though not more illustrious, than in the time of your glorious Queen, who defeated even the Invincible Armada of Spain. What a woman! And I hear also of you, *Señor Punch*, and that you desire to right the wrong and to succour the oppressed, as all brave men should do. No doubt there are still wrongs to right, though you have an assembly of representatives of the people who talk for six months of every year in order to do this, and have talked in like manner for centuries, and yet there are men in your country who clamour for work and children who cry for food. *Válame Dios!* why do they talk so much and achieve so little?

I hear there is in your country an ingenious gentleman, named, I think, DON JOSÉ DE LA TARIFA, who loves, as I loved, to tilt at giants—or at windmills, as my squire SANCHO PANZA called them. I never could quite understand which they were. I know not if DON JOSÉ be



A TIGHT FIT.

"COME ON, GRANDPA, THERE'S JUST ROOM UNDER HERE, I THINK!"

one of your friends, but I hear that his brave arm offers protection to the oppressed, and AMADIS DE GAULA himself could have done no more. Yet in former days he offered each citizen a cow, which was indeed a strange gift for a knight errant. And you have other ingenious gentlemen, who run their swords into wine-skins, or beer-barrels, and themselves drink only water, or a decoction of the strange Eastern herb called tea. *Gran merced!* There are still followers of AMADIS DE GAULA. I hope you have also brave knights who fight for oppressed damsels, as I fought for Doña DULCINEA DEL TOROSO. But it has been said to me that the damsels in your country are now so large of stature and so powerful of limb that they need no one to fight for them.

My squire, SANCHO PANZA, presents his humble respects. I kiss the hands of your Excellency, and I am your servant,
QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA.

Timid Little Man (apologetically, to large and terrifying female Dummy). I leave it you, partner. Dummy. Coward!

WHEN?

It is not when the green Venetian blind Flaps at the wayward prompting of the wind,
That thoughts of thee come crowding to the mind.

When with adroitly modulated brush My few remaining hairs I coax and crush, No words of thine into my memory rush.
Nor, when with nimble hands that work apace,
Low bending, I begin my boots to lace, Do I look up and seem to see thy face.
If haply now and then when things go wrong,
In moments weak I use a word too strong, It brings no music from Love's old sweet song.

Roses may bloom and strawberries grow red,
Yet dreams of days with thee forever fled Refuse to come, but keep away instead.
Ah sad! from such a height so soon to fall!
Those halcyon days, those days beyond recall,

I fear I never think of them at all.



AFTER A SHOOT IN COUNTY CLARE.

Master. "WELL, PADDY, WHAT SORT OF A BAG?"

Paddy. "WELL, YER HONOUR, COUNTIN' THE RABBITS, THERE IS NINE DISTINCT SPAYCIES O' BIRDS!"

OPEN LETTER.

TO A PAIR OF FOOTBALL BOOTS.

(With acknowledgments to Mr. C. B. Fry in the
"Daily Express.")

DEAR OLD PALS,—I want to speak to you seriously and as man to man, because you're not mere dead hide, are you? No, no, you are intelligent, sentient soles, and to be treated as such by every player.

Ah! booties, booties, you little beauties, what a lot you mean to us, don't you? and how hardly we use you.

I've known men to take you off after a game, hurl you—as Jove hurled his thunderbolts—into a corner of the pav. and there leave you till you are next required.

Ah! old men, that's not right, is it? How would we great machines of bone, muscle, and nerve-centre (ah! those nerve-centres, what tricky things they

are!), how would we be for the next match if we were treated like that? Pretty stiff and stale, eh, old booties?

Now, look here, when we come in after a hard, slogging game, our bodies and the grey matter in our brains thoroughly exhausted, immediately we've had our bath, our rub-down, and our cup of steaming hot Hercubos (I find Hercubos the finest thing to keep fit on during a hard season) we must turn our attention to you, booties.

First, out from our little bag must come our piece of clean, sweet selvyt. With it all that nasty black slime that gets into your pores and makes you crack must be wiped off. Now, before a good blazing fire of coal—not coke, mind, the fumes of a coke fire pale and de-oxygenate the red corpuscles of our blood, you know—we must carefully warm you till you are ripe to receive a real good dousing of our Porpo (I find

Porpo the finest thing for keeping boots soft and pliable).

Finally, with a white silk handkerchief we must give you a soft polishing, and there you are, sweet and trim against our next match. Every morning you may be sure we will, like Boreas, drive away the clouds of dust that collect on you.

And then there are the laces to attend to. Oh, yes, your laces are like our nerve-fibres, the little threads that keep the whole big body taut and sound. They, too, must have a good rubbing of Porpo and a rest if they need it.

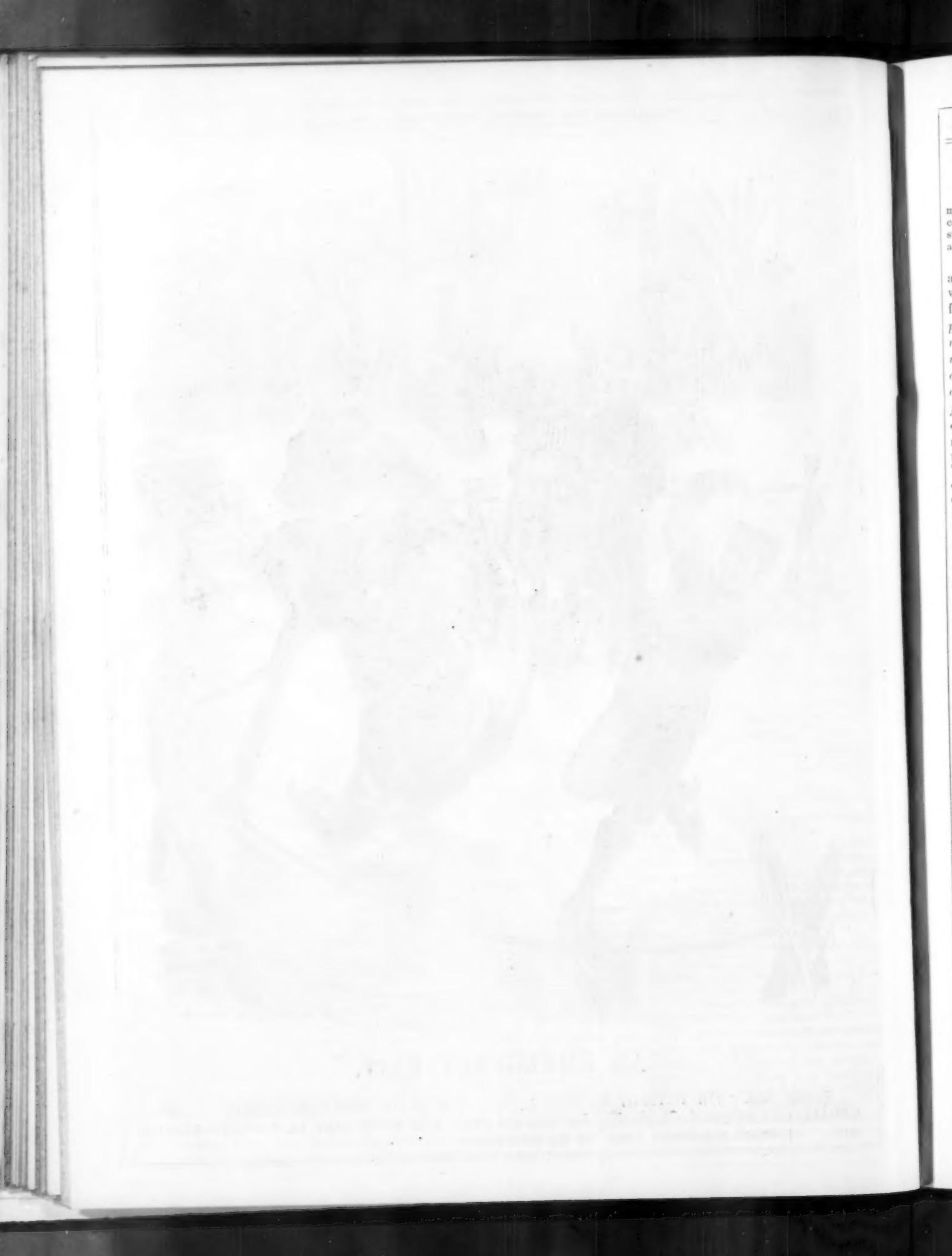
Ah! and won't you repay our trouble, booties, when next we slip you on! How tightly you will clasp us just above the tubercles of our tibiae, how firmly you will grip our pliant toes, how you will help us to send the ball swishing—low and swift—into the well-tarred net!

Good-night, booties.



AN EMERGENCY EXIT.

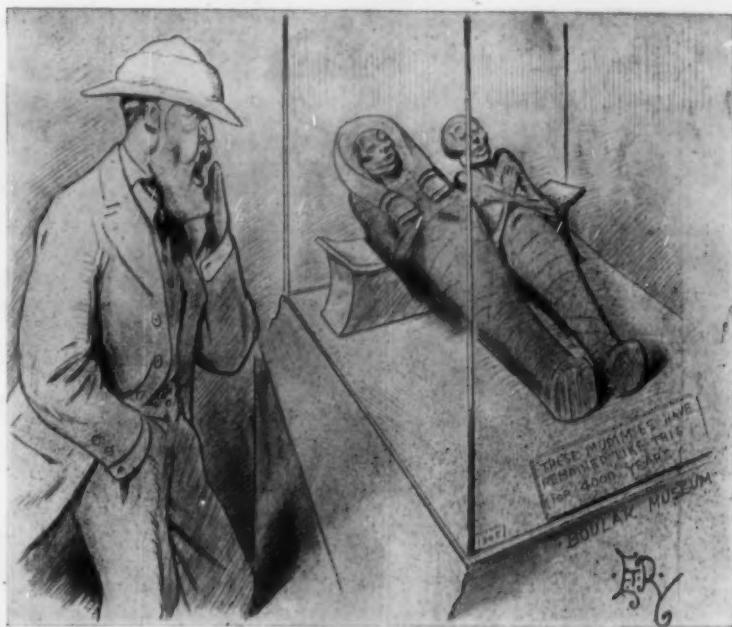
RUSSIAN BEAR. "I'M CUTTING RATHER A POOR FIGURE IN THIS COMPETITION. I THINK I SHALL GET OUTSIDE ON TO THE DANGEROUS PART, AND THEN THEY'LL HAVE TO RESCUE ME. . . . I SHOULD RATHER LIKE TO BE RESCUED."



THE LEADING ARTICLE OF THE FUTURE.

[The following article was written by a member of the Editorial staff of *Mr. Punch* in collaboration with a member of the Advertising staff who independently investigated and tested all the products here described.]

STRANGE and paradoxical as it may appear, the War has drawn yellow and white together for the first time by a feeling of human equality. But while a prolonged study of the humane arts may refine and soften the mind—"emollit mores" as OVID has it, neither all the colours of the rainbow nor all the perfumes of silken Samarcand can conjure a badly-fatted soap into a fit and beneficent emollient for the human skin. But to resume our study of the psychological results of the great conflict in the Far East. The generous conduct of the municipality of Nagasaki towards the Russian captives cannot but exert a powerful influence in assuaging international animosities. One consequence may be that intermarriage between the Japanese and Western nations will gradually become frequent, with results to the future of civilisation as a whole that the intelligent anticipation of the most highly-trained publicist can hardly hope to fathom. On the other hand a detergent intended for use in the "balneum matutinum" or "morning tub" must possess greater tenacity of fibre and in consequence requires a higher percentage of tallow. The bearing of this on the production of New Zealand mutton and the entire preferential system will not escape the most superficial observer. In the meantime the Japanese Press, not without considerable provocation, is beginning to protest against the laxity with which the French authorities in Madagascar have construed their obligations as neutrals, while simultaneously Russian journals of all shades of opinion are denouncing their "dear allies" for the inadequacy of their benevolence. The French are no longer in good odour in St. Petersburg. And this reminds us that the scenting of tablets is an art in which few soapboilers attain perfection. All the perfumes of Araby, the blossoms of Cashmere, and the recondite aromas of the by-products of Baku are blended by the modern alchemist in one superb and engrossing totality. Success in this process is the work of a lifetime, nay, of many lifetimes. For it is, alas! only too true that an odour which would be admirable in a detergent would be positively disgusting on a mouchoir. It is the old, old story. What is one man's



THE D-KE OF D-V-NSH-RE IN EGYPT.

His Grace (yawning). "LUCKY BEGGARS!!"

meat is another man's poison, and we must never forget that one of the greatest British prelates of the nineteenth century was distinguished by a sobriquet emphasising his saponaceous excellence. But on the chessboard of life as on that of pastime the moves of bishops or kings do not always decide the greatest issues. In the opinion of the most acute observers the ultimate arbiter of Russia's fate is neither CZAR nor MIKADO, KUROPATKIN nor OYAMA. If Russia is overthrown it will be not from without but from within. The moujik as an individual may be a negligible quantity, but multiplied by ninety millions he becomes a portent. Hitherto he has never shown any capacity for united action, but within the last few weeks the possibility of a jacquerie infinitely transcending the most formidable peasant outbreaks of France has advanced rapidly to the stage of imminent menace. The consumption of soap by the moujik is extremely limited. Indeed, he cannot even be said to emulate the historic vaunt of a former King of SAXONY, who once observed, "I wash myself every fortnight, whether I require it or not." Yet a good toilet soap, whose virtues as an emollient are admitted by every dermic expert, can now be produced by GRICE AND COMPANY'S magical process at a price which brings it within the reach of the most impudent moushik in the entire dominions of the great WHITE CZAR. In this context it is impossible to over-estimate the significance of the recent strike among the workmen employed at the Neva Shipbuilding yards. Russian Ministers have declared that the reconstruction of their fleet is an indispensable preliminary to the successful prosecution of the campaign in the Far East. But ships cannot build themselves. When TOPSY said, "'Spect I groused,' she overlooked one prime essential in the normal development of the human frame, the habitual use in ablution of a sound, pure, and properly-fatted soap. It is true that some temerarious reactionaries, intoxicated with the exuberance of their own eccentricity, have not scrupled to assert that all the ills which flesh is heir to have their origin in the use of soap. Such persons are best left to welter in the noisome obscurity to which their anarchical sentiments condemn them. Have they forgotten, we should like to know, what was the fate of the great unwashed when the Coldstream Guards were summoned to disperse the rioters in Coldbath Fields? Have they forgotten the tragic and terrible results of that appalling "cri du cœur," "What, no soap?" which heralded the Armageddon in which the Great Panjandrum fell, "ruining through the illimitable



Lofty Candidate. "AND, GENTLEMEN, I—AR—MAY CONFESS, WIT,I—AR—SOME PARDONABLE PRIDE, THAT MY ANCESTARS CAME OVAR WITH THE CONQUERAH!"
Voice from the Crowd. "YAH! GARN! ALIEN HIMMIGRANT!"

inane"? We may not all be able to lunch every day at the Savoy Restaurant, or to keep a 60-h.p. Mercédès, but there is one thing that no self-respecting citizen can dispense with—a cake of pure, true, honest, properly-fatted soap, which forms the leading article of MESSRS. GRICE'S output—and our own.

CHARIVARIA.

THE CZAR, it is stated, is contributing £10,000,000 towards the expenses of equipping a third Baltic Fleet for the Far East. This present to the Japanese is said to be in return for the chivalrous treatment of the defenders of Port Arthur.

It is stated that General KUROPAKIN is only waiting for a fine day to commence another battle. But if the strikes in Russia continue it may become necessary for his next "advance" to be made in a direct line for St. Petersburg.

PIERRE LOTI, in his *Escales au Japon*, expresses the view that the manners of the Japanese have been deteriorating, and, in the expressions of a crowd in Nagasaki who mobbed two Frenchmen for kicking a dog, he fancied he could detect a hatred of all Europeans.

Germany's wish to be friends with England having been received with

some scepticism in this country, a proof of the earnestness of her intentions was asked for, and a coal strike has been organised in Westphalia to England's great advantage.

According to the *Daily Chronicle*, the news that an Anglo-German Club is to be formed in London has created an excellent effect in Berlin. Some such association with similar objects is now contemplated there, and "its members," says our contemporary, "would embrace leading men in public life." This is, perhaps, needlessly effusive.

Some idea of the rigour of the winter in Germany may be gathered from the fact that one man in Munich has stolen forty-four overcoats.

The leading Boers in the Transvaal are starting a fierce opposition to the Imperial proposals for a new Constitution, being apprehensive that these may not result in Boer supremacy. It seems a pity to go out of our way to alienate our friends.

We like to see a paper up to date. The *Express* published, last week, an article entitled "The Finest Falls in the World" on what was certainly the most slippery morning we have had this year.

According to the *Sporting and Dramatic News* a number of wolf cubs have

in recent years been sold to hunts in this country as young foxes. Words fail us to express our indignation that persons can be found so vile as to take advantage of innocent country folk like this. Someone will be palming off young elephants on them next.

Shortly after leaving Jamaica on the steamer *Atrato*, a second-class passenger was attacked by a snake measuring 5 ft. 8 in. The brute is supposed to have come on board with a consignment of rum.

Recent statistics show that London is becoming increasingly healthy, and it is regrettable that so many Englishmen should continue to patronise foreign health resorts. The exodus to the Riviera shows no signs of decreasing, and can only be explained by the pressure resulting from alien immigration.

Meanwhile, according to the Birth-rate returns, Londoners, who are rightly accused of taking no pride in their city, are showing an increased aversion to being born.

It will shortly be possible to book seats in the Gallery at the St. James's Theatre. This will obviate the present inconvenient necessity of hurrying away from a dinner at the Carlton.

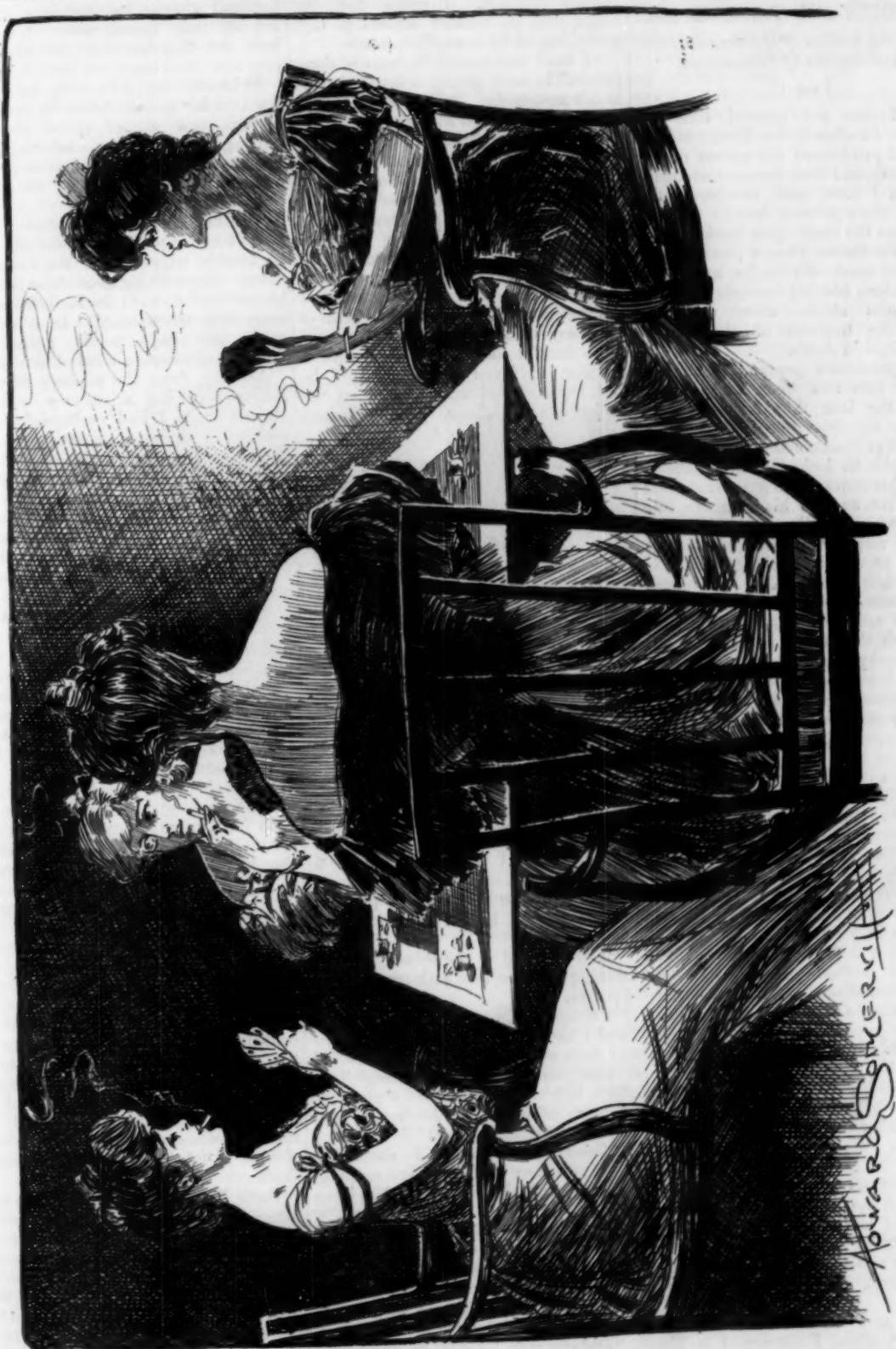
A number of persons have written letters to the Manager of Drury Lane Theatre to say that *The White Cat*, as altered, is not so futile and improper as the *Daily Mail* said it was before it was altered.

The Artillery, it is announced, will shortly be supplied with a new dress cap, having a peak and red band, which will make all the men look like officers. This clever device will, we suspect, attract to that branch of the Service more men than officers.

We think that the high state of civilisation reached by *Coco*, the marvellous monkey, has been exaggerated. It is true that when he attends a theatre, and is pleased, he claps his paws, but the beast cannot boo.

The first number of the *Grand Magazine*, we see from an advertisement, contains an article by Sir A. CONAN DOYLE, entitled "My Best Story, and why I think so." Everyone, we imagine, will be anxious to hear more about SHERLOCK HOLMES's first death.

Are we becoming less gallant? When Miss CORELLI declared, in her address at Northampton, "We have to-day no SCOTT, THACKERAY, or DICKENS," there was not a single cry of "But we've got you, Miss."



PRIMUM VIVERE, DEINDE PHILOSOPHARI.

"Is Flossie's engagement really off, then?"

"Oh, yes. Jack wanted her to give up gambling and smoking, and goodness knows what else."

(Chorus) "How absurd!"

HARLEQUIN AND THE HEROINE;
Or, How the Maiden of Melodramia fared
in the Regions of Pantomimia.

PART II.

BUT I was not allowed time for soliloquy, for already the distant strains of a band proclaimed the advent of the Royal party, and in an access of maidenly confusion I drew aside to observe the entrance of my princely lover.

Then, as the music grew louder, there entered the Market Place a procession of sportsmen, some with bugles, some with spears, others bearing animals of every known and almost every unknown variety, the trophies of their skill, already rigid in death.

These gentlemen grouped themselves naturally into two lines, and it was through the lane thus formed that I beheld for the first time H.R.H. Prince PRETTIMAN of Pantomimia.

How noble he looked, as with delicate and haughty step he advanced to meet me! He was clad, as were his comrades, in a costume which, while of suitably rich and even resplendent material, was yet designed to permit of that freedom of limb which is so essential to the pursuit of the chase. His demeanour was at once arch and engaging, and I immediately felt that I was in the presence of no ordinary being.

"Well, boys," said the Prince, addressing his followers in a voice whose singular quality would alone have commanded attention, even apart from his practice of speaking, as is, I understand, the habit of royalty, entirely in rhymed couplets—"Well, boys, once more we're here at last. With all our dangers and our perils past; Once more we gaze upon our homes and see Each well-known cottage and each family tree. But who comes here, what vision meets my eyes? The Baron's daughter! what a sweet surprise!"

His words were indeed gratifying, though I was at first a little at a loss for the proper method of receiving such lyrical blandishments. Remembering, however, that a safe rule for heroines under any circumstances says, "When in doubt, droop," I drooped accordingly. I also blushed.

But I will not recall our conversation *verbatim*; indeed, my memory has retained rather the Prince's reasons than his rhymes. Enough that we plighted our troth in the midst of a chorus, several choruses, of approval; a certain publicity of the emotions is one of the penalties of exalted station. That His Royal Highness had mistaken me for my cousin was a detail with which I hesitated at such a moment to embarrass him.

So soon as I was alone I sought out Sir RUPERT, whom I discovered in The

Baron's Kitchen. I could not but notice that his manner seemed to lack something of its wonted assurance.

"I don't understand the ways of these people," he said, giving a dejected twirl to his moustache. "They don't appear to have the remotest idea of plot."

"While," I returned, "your whole existence is one of deception and intrigue. Go, Sir RUPERT, your presence here is hateful to me, but doubtless there are those by whom such a gentleman as you would be appreciated!"

I emphasised the word "gentleman" sarcastically, and we both waited for the customary response. As none came, I was forced to add, "I mean the villain of whom my cousin spoke. Surely he—"

Sir RUPERT closed his eyes with a shudder. "If you had seen him," he said, "you would understand that the subject is a painful one. He was dressed



Hurling vegetables at Sir Rupert.

like a pirate—I am endeavouring to forget his boots."

It was impossible not to pity the miscreant. He looked so forlorn and lonely.

"I'm engaged to the Prince," I said, thinking to cheer him with the prospect of action.

"Of course you are," said Sir RUPERT, "and I'm waiting here to kill your Uncle and then say that the Prince did it. I at least can do my duty, although," he added bitterly, "there isn't a pistol or an ounce of poison in the house; and they call that management!"

"Cowardly traitor!" I exclaimed, "your treachery shall avail you nothing. I at least will always believe him innocent."

"Miow-wow," said a voice.

"Confound that Cat," muttered Sir RUPERT, "it's all over the place;" and as he spoke I perceived the creature, one of unusual size, regarding us with an expression of almost human intelligence.

"Old comrade," I said, employing my

habitual address to domestic pets, "you are my only friend now. You alone have not forsaken me, you alone can pity and understand my sorrow."

Evidently comprehending my words, the faithful animal dried its eyes with its tail, and danced round the room hurling vegetables at Sir RUPERT; it was not exactly what I had expected, but I was nevertheless touched by this exhibition of dumb sympathy.

At this moment the kitchen door opened and my Uncle entered the room backwards, tripping over the Cat as he did so. Considering the circumstances of his arrival I thought its method showed some lack of delicacy. In a murder scene dear papa would never have dreamed of entering without slow music.

Arguing from the analogy of those members of the aristocracy whom I already knew, I had perhaps formed a conception of Lord BROKEUP somewhat alien from the actual figure which I now beheld. The Baron is a little gentleman, dressed in a costume of an old-fashioned style; he still, for instance, retains a curled wig of the period of WILLIAM THE THIRD. His garments also betray some signs of an honourable poverty, and are worn, moreover, with a certain air of the eccentric not unbecoming in one of his years and position. It is to this also that I attribute his habit of blowing upon a football whistle and exclaiming "Half-time," in circumstances which do not appear to call for such an observation. On the whole, his should be, I fancy, a most lovable nature.

Before, however, I had time for more than an expression of horror, Sir RUPERT drew forth an enormous sword, and with a muttered malediction aimed a blow at the old gentleman's heart. The weapon crumpled uselessly in his hand.

"Half-time!" said my Uncle pleasantly, as he brushed the dust from his coat. "It always does that, you know, because of the joke about the War Office and Government Contracts."

I confess that I felt sorry for Sir RUPERT. He scowled bravely, but it was evident that the failure had unnerved him. Turning on his heel he was about to quit the apartment, when he was prevented by the sudden entrance of my Aunt, who, clasping him round the waist, constrained him to the execution of what is, I believe, known as a double shuffle.

Uncle BROKEUP and the Cat then commenced to fling the kitchen furniture in every direction, an occupation in which my Aunt, having released Sir RUPERT, joined heartily. I hasten to draw a veil over the conclusion of the scene. Both Sir RUPERT and I did our best, but it is indeed difficult to be emotional in an atmosphere opaque with crockery. Even

my own dignified and heart-broken reserve must have suffered from the frequent necessity of bending before the storm of hardware.

When it had abated, and the air was again clear, I ventured to reproach my Uncle very gently for its introduction, but without effect.

"My dear," he answered, arranging the mat for his habitual and most indecorous mode of exit, "you must get used to that sort of thing before we go to the Halls," and ere I could inquire the meaning of this expression, he disappeared, head, as usual, foremost.

It was in scenes like these that I first learnt to doubt the wisdom of my choice and to pine for the simpler and less

chaotic atmosphere of home. Nevertheless, a Prince, however unworthy, is still a Prince, and I was determined to go through with it. Even after the hideous moment when I beheld him in a straw hat, garments (which I will not particularise) of blue and white cotton, with a banjo in his hand and castanets upon his heels, repeating some scurrilous libel in which I was addressed as an Ethiopian, even then, when my idol of heroic dignity was shattered, I had yet one source of courage. I looked forward to an existence of stately and even tragic splendour as a Queen Consort. It was for this that I endured the abandoned levity of my suitor, the vulgarity of my relations, and the thousand agonies that can be suffered by a soul like mine from surroundings so uncongenial. How was I destined to be deceived!

IMPERIAL CHIT-CHAT.

DEAR Mamma does get such unfortunate crazes for things, and they do so often lead to unpleasantnesses between the people here. Her very latest was the result of the Earl of JERSEY saying that the English-speaking people ought not only to think imperially but to gossip imperially.

Mamma laid down the *Daily Mail* when she read that, and said she thought it a most valuable idea, and

that she would encourage it in Slumberleigh with all her heart.

"Of course," Mamma said to all the friends we met in the village that day, "of course we don't gossip in Slumberleigh, but what Lord JERSEY means is obvious, and we will do it."

"Now," she said to me, "I've got a brilliant idea: next Wednesday we'll give an Imperial At Home for Imperial Gossip, just to give the idea a good start."

That is Mamma all over. So enthusiastic!

We went at once to the stationer's, where Mamma bought some invitation cards and the *Daily Mail Year Book*.

Wednesday arrived. I felt I should

had a nephew there who wrote her long letters, so she told us lots about the country, the life there, its products, and all that. Everybody listened eagerly, and several threw in very intelligent remarks. Mamma, for example, said: "Of course they desire reciprocity?" and Mrs. TOWERS replied that they were longing for it.

Then she paused for a minute to take a sip of tea, and Miss SNAPPE joined in. She leaned forward, smiling, and said:

"How very interesting; but I thought this was to be an *Imperial gossip*?"

"Yes," Mrs. TOWERS replied in her most vinegary tones, "yes, that is why we are talking about the *Colonies*."

Miss SNAPPE positively shone with excitement.

"Unfortunately," she said, "—would you kindly hand me the cake; thank you so much—unfortunately the Argentine is not a Colony of ours."

Mrs. TOWERS went crimson.

"Then perhaps you will tell me, Miss SNAPPE," she snorted, "why in my atlas the Argentine is coloured red?"

Then it was poor dear Mamma's turn.

"Yes," she said, "I think you must be wrong, Miss SNAPPE; you know what the great Imperialist said: 'All red,—all British, you know!'"

Miss SNAPPE was too venomous for words. She threw an apologetic note into her voice and said: "Oh, was he referring to Africa?"

I saw the trap and shuddered; but Mamma and Mrs. TOWERS simply plunged in.

"Certainly!" cried poor Mamma.

"Of course!" cried Mrs. TOWERS.

"Because," Miss SNAPPE said, rising, "the Argentine, according to my map, is in South America." Then she said good-bye and went.

Nothing more has ever been heard of Imperial Gossip in Slumberleigh.

Nobody wants to curtail the well-earned recreations of the L.C.C., but their designs, lately published, for a "Bridge" Hall, seem to the poor rate-payers a little extravagant. Would not a "Pit" Parlour serve their purpose?



The Grey Lady of Moatville Grange. "PORTER, IS THERE A 'BOOGIE' CARRIAGE ATTACHED TO THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS?"

[According to an evening paper, a ghost train has been seen on one of the London railways, with ghostly passengers alighting at a spectral siding.]

be fearfully out of the conversation. One thing puzzled me very much, so I asked Mamma in as off-hand a manner as I could:

"Oh, by the way, Mamma," I said, "what does 'to think imperially' mean exactly?"

Mamma replied that what they taught me at Miss PASSER's goodness only knew, and then she picked up the *Year Book* and I could hardly get another word out of her.

* * * * *

Almost immediately unpleasantness arose between Mrs. TOWERS and Miss SNAPPE. Miss SNAPPE hates Mrs. TOWERS because Mrs. TOWERS took her cook after she left Miss SNAPPE.

It was like this. The conversation had flagged from the very first until suddenly Mrs. TOWERS began talking about the Argentine. It appeared she

BACK TO THE LISTS.

[“The motor-car is reviving the old class-feeling.”—*Vide Papers.*]

WHEN tilting knights on grassy tract
Measured their prowess—and their length;
When life was hard for those who lacked
The simple *savoir faire* of strength;
When Justices left jokes to Dagonet,
And no one kept an autowagonette;—

Your villein seldom suffered loss,
But lived at peace, the while his lord
Would very likely run across
Some errant blade of ARTHUR's board,
Who loved upon the turf to chance a lot—
GAWAINE, or LAMORAK, or LANCELOT.

And surely it were fairer now
For visor'd cranks, who armour-clad
Fordo the ruminating cow,
Make stolid roosters leap like mad,
(And more they do, that I in mercy veil,
Unknightly deeds unknown to PERCIVALE)—

If these should in some forest lorn,
Holding a Tournament of Cars,
Feuter and foil from break of morn
Till all beheld amazing stars,
While to and fro with oil to plenish all
Shunted Sir K.O2 the Seneschal,

Then might we sing, like bards of yore,
How well Sir PANHARD fought his whack,
And battered with a buffet sore
Sir TÊTE DE MOTOMANIAQUE;
And shelled his brains, like peas that stocked a pod,
Around his 20 h.p. Octopod!

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

In *Cross River Natives* (HUTCHINSON), Mr. CHARLES PARTRIDGE throws vivid light on a little-known territory. As Assistant District Commissioner in Southern Nigeria he made the most of opportunities of studying and describing the country and the natives. The former my Baronite cannot honestly recommend to the jaded Londoner for a holiday trip. A country in which it is necessary for the European to begin the day with a five-grain tabloid of quinine has its ominous aspect. This is at six in the morning. “At seven P.M.,” says the ever-cheery PARTRIDGE, “you get into coat, pyjamas and mosquito boots, the dinner dress at bush stations.” Mosquito curtains we know. When we hear of necessity for mosquito boots we think tenderly of London, even in a fog. There are all kinds of casual callers. “Sitting reading under the verandah one day,” MR. PARTRIDGE pleasantly mentions, “something from the roof fell with a thud at my feet.” It was merely a snake with a full-grown lizard half-way down its throat. Item—there are centipedes, huge spiders, and ants which move in columns four inches broad and half an inch thick. Occasionally, your bedroom being in the line of march, they cross it, incidentally storming the bed. “Fire or hot ashes,” says the imperturbable PARTRIDGE, “are the best means for expelling them.” Doubtless: but this contingency for the use of one's bedroom fire is not usually contemplated on retiring to rest. Then there is the hippopotamus, who “thrusts his ugly brown head out of the water and gazes around with great goggle eyes, and snorts with defiant contempt.” This may be well meant, but it is disturbing. Apart from these graphic touches of daily life, the volume, illustrated by many photographs, is full of



information. Owing to official training and associations, much of it is written in the literary style consecrated to blue books. When he lets himself go, the Assistant District Commissioner writes admirably.

Mrs. Maybrick's Own Story (FUNK AND WAGNALLS) will, my Baronite believes, bring many wavering to the conclusion that she was a wronged woman. Legal questions arising out of the trial, which form the second half of the volume, are dealt with by another hand. *Mrs. MAYBRICK*'s task is confined to a narrative of her life in prison. Its accomplishment is marked by an absence of bitter feeling remarkable in the circumstances, calculated to extend and deepen sympathy in the public mind. The story is a powerful plea for establishment of a Criminal Court of Appeal. Incidentally *Mrs. MAYBRICK* offers suggestions for the improvement of the system ruling Women's Prisons that are well worth the attention of the authorities.

A dainty book is *Gwen* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON), truly described as “an idyll of the Cañon.” It is the first work by Mr. RALPH CONNOR my Baronite has come across. But the sale record of his earlier efforts, apparently in the same line of country, has run over the score of thousands. The locality where the scene is laid is vaguely described as “Old Latours, far up among the hills near the Devil's Lake.” Anyhow, it is the Wild West of beautiful America, as yet untamed by railway track, untarnished by town life. An added pleasure to the simple story is found in the illustrations, done with swift, light, but sure touch.

The Baron welcomes *The Georgics of Virgil* (MURRAY), translated into English by Lord BURGHCLERE. Who could more appropriately have been selected for such a task than Lord BURGHCLERE, once Gladstonian Minister of Agriculture, who had himself commenced life as a GARDNER?

FLORENCE WARDEN has given us a sensational story which, if not quite on a par with her very best work in this line, runs it very close. Her new romance, *The Face in the Flashlight* (JOHN LONG), takes hold of the reader at once, nor is the interest ever allowed to drop. The mystification is well-contrived and skilfully sustained. Where the authoress has taken so much trouble, it is a pity that she did not repress her sense of humour when depicting the actions of the lover, Mr. Hugo Dredé, who, as an amateur detective, disguises himself in an “Italian hat and cloak” and “policeman's boots.” Thus, a smile is raised just when we ought to be on the tenterhooks of suspense, breathlessly watching the course of a tragic drama. The dénouement, too, is somewhat commonplace. But in spite of these two mistakes, lovers of sensation will not find any recent novel, with which the Baron is acquainted, more to their taste than is *The Face in the Flashlight*.



“In that fierce light which beats upon a throne” the sporting propensities of H.R.H. Princess HENRY of Battenberg have hitherto escaped notice. But, according to the *Chronicle*,

“A woman who brought an action in Leeds County Court gave as her Christian name Princess Beatrice . . . and it was explained that the father, a publican and a sporting enthusiast, had named all his children after prominent sportsmen.”

THE SECRET OF PERPETUAL YOUTH.—The Everlasting Children's Bib, 1s.—*Advt. in “Daily Graphic.”*